

NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON DAMS AND DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA

Institutional Networking Meeting with the International Financial and Non-Financial Institutions.

MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 11th May, 2010 Time: 10:⁰⁰ – 12:⁰⁰ Venue: AGRA Conference Room

CHAIRPERSON:

Dr. Liqa Raschid-Sally

INVITED GUESTS PRESENT

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| 1) Mr. Simon Manu | GTZ |
| 2) Mr. Kwame A. Adam | WWF – WAFPO |
| 3) Mr. Felix A. Amakye | Institute of Local Government Studies. |
| 4) Mr. Kojo Anane Frimpong | People’s Dialogue on Human Settlements |
| 5) Dr. E.O. Bekeo | Water Research Institute |
| 6) Nene Tetteh Amoako IV | Natriku Resettlement Township |
| 7) Hon. Isaac Agbo Tetteh | Lower Manya Krobo District Assembly |
| 8) Mrs. Cynthia Aglah | Volta River Authority |
| 9) Mrs. Patience Asem | VRA Resettlement Trust Fund |
| 10) Ms. Rhoda Arthur | Volta River Authority |
| 11) Mr. S.A. Appenteng | Association of Ghana Industries |
| 12) Dr. F Diaby-Pentzlin | National House of Chiefs/GTZ |
| 13) Dr. Liqa Raschid-Sally | International Water Management Institute |
| 14) Mr. Richard Koranteng | Volta Basin Development Foundation |
| 15) Ms. Maija Hirvonen | International Water Management Institute |
| 16) Mr. Edmund K. Akoto-Danso | International Water Management Institute |

REGRETS

1. The Country Representative, The World Bank
2. The Country Representative, IFC
3. The Country Representative, DANIDA
4. The Country Representative, UNEP
5. The Country Representative, UNDP
6. The Country Representative, DFID
7. The Country Representative, Wetlands International
8. The Ambassador, The German Embassy
9. The Ambassador, The Chinese Embassy
10. The Ambassador, The Netherland Embassy
11. The Ambassador, The South Africa Embassy

AGENDA

1. Opening and Self Introduction
2. Presentations
 - 2.2.1 Brief Background to the GDD
 - 2.2.2 Rationale for the Institutional Networking meeting and Capacity Building for Dam Affected Communities (DAC)
3. Activities of the Volta River Authority Trust Fund for DAC's
4. Discussion
5. Wrap Up

<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Issue</i>
1. Opening & self-introductions	<p>The chairperson, Dr. Liqa Raschid-Sally, invited Ms. Patience Asem to lead an opening prayer. Dr. Raschid-Sally then asked all participants to introduce themselves (see list of participants). She noted that there was no attendance at the meeting from the International Financial and Non-Financial Institutes (IF & NFIs), despite several having confirmed their participation. She surmised that although many of the invited IF & NFIs had been a part of the World Commission on Dams, and are involved in dams-related activities in other countries, they are not present in the dams sector in Ghana. Moreover, she noted the Ghana Dams Dialogue emphasised in its interactions with the IF & NFIs that the issues that would be discussed today cut across dams, and pertain to broader questions around civic participation in governance, local government capacities, basic service provision, and others. Nevertheless, the message appears not to have been received. These factors may explain the absence of the IF & NFIs. The meeting would, all the same, provide an opportunity for this particular constellation of participants to discuss key concerns and forge a way forward.</p>
2. Presentations	<p>Dr. Raschid-Sally gave the first presentation of the day. This provided a brief background to the Ghana Dams Dialogue. She explained that the origins of the Ghana Dams Dialogue are anchored in a global-level debate on dams, which culminated in the establishment of the World Commission on Dams (WCD) in the late 1990s. The development of dams worldwide had been intensifying, and viewpoints regarding their positive and negative impacts were becoming increasingly entrenched. Against this backdrop, the WCD sought to take a critical look at the sustainability of these large water sector infrastructures. More than 53 countries and organisations were involved in the process itself. Among others, the WCD found that there were weak regulatory frameworks and a lack of enforcement; little public participation and scrutiny; top-down, often politically motivated, decision-making; a lack of resolution of past conflicts and no legal recourse; vested interests in favour of large infrastructure; and no incentives or sanctions that might prompt a change in behaviour. According to Dr. Raschid-Sally, most of these findings are relevant to the situation in Ghana as well.</p> <p>Following the publications of the WCD's Dams and Development Report in 2000, individual countries began to seek ways of implementing the report's core values and strategic principles. The Ghana Dams Dialogue is the product of</p>

	<p>such efforts in Ghana. It consists of a sixty-member Forum; a sixteen-member National Coordinating Committee; and a Secretariat, which is hosted by the International Water Management Institute. Its stakeholders can be broadly categorised into Ministries, Departments and Agencies; research organisations; local level institutions; NGOs and the media; dam-affected communities (DACs) and traditional structures; national operators and the private sector; and IF & NFIs. The GDD is currently in its third phase. The first phase of the project focused on the establishment of the Dialogue; the second sought to strengthen the process; while the current one aims to consolidate its achievements.</p> <p>In terms of outputs and impacts, the Ghana Dams Dialogue has succeeded in clarifying the institutional setting and decision-making processes and pathways for hydropower dams. It sees a clear need to reconcile the roles of national government with those of local government, as well as to strengthen interactions between various sectors. There also appears to be a lack of a clear culture of accountability, and little assimilation of lessons from past dams into the current hydropower dam project at Bui. The Ghana Dams Dialogue has also helped shape the context of dams-related issues by playing a key role in negotiations and resolving conflict between stakeholder groups; knowledge-sharing; and awareness-raising.</p> <p>There remain, however, a number of outstanding issues. The way forward for the VRA Resettlement Trust Fund must be clarified, and the relationship between DACs and district assemblies must be strengthened. In addition, the governance of water and energy resources development must be fortified such that there is space for public participation, capacity-building and empowerment as well as mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>At the end of the presentation, Dr. Raschid-Sally invited participants to seek clarification on the matters that she raised. Kwame Adam from WWF queried whether the Land and Forestry Commissions are members of the Dialogue. Dr. Raschid-Sally explained that the two are members of the larger Forum, and the Secretariat and the National Coordinating Council are able to revert to them on specific concerns.</p>
	<p>Richard Twum Koranteng gave the day's second presentation, which focused on capacity-building of DACs. He began by situating the DACs within the national, regional and district-level contexts of Ghana. The construction of Akosombo led to the creation of the world's largest man-made lake, and the displacement of an estimated 80 000 people – often far away from their original settlements. The Volta River Authority, which had initially assumed responsibility for the welfare of the DACs, eventually 'transferred' these communities to the district assemblies through the Ministry of</p>

Social Welfare. However, this 'handing over' process lacked clarity and transparency, and raised a number of issues that remain unresolved.

Among others, the DACs are said to lack representation in the district assemblies, even when their numbers merit such representation. As a result, the DACs have no say in the running of the districts. Indeed, this speaks of a more pervasive lack of mutual recognition between DACs and district assemblies. On the one hand, DACs continue to revert to the VRA – as opposed to the district assemblies – for basic service provision and livelihood support. On the other hand, there are sustained disputes between certain district assemblies as to whose jurisdiction the resettled DACs fall under. Finally, many DACs are faced with the aftermath of unsatisfactory land acquisition processes. There continue to be claims that the Government has not paid compensation either to DACs or to the communities that now host them, leading at times to conflicts between the two.

In order to resolve such impasse, the Ghana Dams Dialogue has recognised the need to build the capacities of both DACs (specifically, the Town Development Committees) and district assemblies in order to empower them to exercise their rights and responsibilities. The DACs would also benefit from the provision of counterpart funding for the purposes of social infrastructure. Finally, the Dialogue sees a need to shape policy reforms such that land acquisition for resettlement purposes is streamlined. This includes making relevant documentation easily available.

Participants had several questions and comments after the presentation. Felix Amakye expressed his concern at the apparent lack of participation of resettled and host communities in the relocation process. Richard Twum Koranteng reiterated the lack of transparency in the handing over process, which partly contributes to the disputes over jurisdiction between district assemblies. Mr. Appenteng stated that it is possible to clearly demarcate district boundaries and thereby determine the communities fall under its jurisdiction.

However, Simon Manu asserted that the issue lies with the lack of awareness on the part of district assemblies. He cited the example of Bui. The government has acquired the land for the project from two districts, and the acquisition has been gazetted. However, the district authorities were unaware of this. The entire process has proceeded without their involvement. Communities are being resettled, and for the moment, their needs are being catered to by the Bui Power Authority. This will not be the case indefinitely. The Bui Power Authority should liaise with the district

	<p>assemblies in order to ensure the DACs sustained well-being.</p> <p>Kojo Anene Frimpong added that the district assemblies are now being approached for compensation. However, they lack information about the processes that have taken place. Similarly, traditional authorities – the original ‘owners’ of the land – are also said to be uninformed regarding the amount of land that has been acquired. He commended the Ghana Dams Dialogue for its efforts to build the capacities of the DACs by bringing together the communities affected by the Volta dams and the Bui dam to learn from their experiences. He also queried about the status of the planned Bui City, and the mechanisms through which it would be governed.</p> <p>Rhoda Arthur responded by saying that in the case of the Akosombo Township, it is the VRA that manages the Township. It has a profit-sharing arrangement with its neighbouring Asuogyaman district assembly. She maintained that the land for Akosombo was clearly vested in the VRA, while the communities and the surrounding land that was not needed for the dam were under the jurisdiction of the district assemblies.</p> <p>Isaac Agbo-Tetteh referred to the Akosombo Township, saying that this arrangement contributed towards the DACs expectations that the VRA cater to their needs as well. He agreed with the need for sensitisation to make communities aware of them falling under the jurisdiction of the district assemblies; what they can expect from the assemblies; and what the assemblies expect of them in return. He called for closer collaboration between the district assemblies and the VRA, and clarification concerning their respective roles.</p> <p>Rhoda Arthur noted that the VRA has been to regional administration.</p> <p>Dr. Raschid-Sally pointed out that much of the interactions seem to take place between district assemblies and the VRA. It is not clear what the level of participation of communities is in these discussions. The scope of information sharing and dialogue must be expanded.</p>
	<p>The final presentation of the day was given by Ms. Patience Asem from the Volta River Authority Trust Fund. Her presentation provided an outline of the rationale for and activities of the Trust Fund, and some of the challenges that it is facing in realising its objectives. She explained that the electricity that is generated by the Akosombo dam benefits the entire nation. However, it comes at a serious cost to the communities in the immediate vicinity of the dam, whose</p>

	<p>lives have been disrupted by its construction. The Trust Fund seeks to ameliorate some of the negative impacts experienced by the DACs. Simultaneously, it serves to relieve the VRA of its role as a welfare provider for the DACs, allowing it instead to concentrate on its core business. The Trust Fund is managed by a Secretariat, which is governed by a Board of Trustees, which includes Members of Parliament and representatives of the VRA and the Ministry of Energy. VRA interacts with DACs primarily through Town Development Committees, which have been established in all resettlement townships.</p> <p>The VRA is mandated to provide the cedi equivalent of US\$ 500,000 to the Trust Fund annually. This money is to be invested in the 52 resettlement townships that were established during the construction of the dam. The main activities of the Trust Fund support activities in the water, sanitation, education, health and social welfare. To date, the Trust Fund has supported the construction and upgrading of schools, markets, community centres, water and sanitation infrastructure as well as health clinics. It has collaborated closely with organisations such as DANIDA, Water Aid, the Community Water and Sanitation Agency, NGOs as well as the district assemblies. Development partners or NGOs that enter the communities to implement projects often ask that the communities contribute a small percentage to project costs. DACs are often unable to do so; in such an event, the Trust Fund pays the cost.</p> <p>Ms. Asem emphasised that the investments that the Trust Fund makes for the benefit of the DACs are channelled through district assemblies. She emphasised that the Trust Fund has had constructive relationships with some district assemblies. But, that it – like the district assemblies – faces various challenges. Among others, the receipt of funds from the VRA is often delayed. Moreover, the Trust Fund’s activities are complicated by land disputes, and claims of lack of compensation to host communities for the land that is now occupied by the resettled communities. Title deeds and land registration concerns – both of DACs and host communities – must be resolved. The basic infrastructure in the resettlement townships is often dilapidated, and its improvement requires major investments. In places, district assemblies have neglected the DACs, thereby shifting expectations to the shoulders of the Trust Fund.</p> <p>The Trust Fund aims to increase its grant from US\$ 500,000 with a concerted fund-raising drive. It also intends to expand the scope of its activities to include more holistic livelihoods support. Importantly, the Trust Fund sees an urgent need to integrate the DACs into the district assembly system.</p>
3. Discussions	Following Ms. Asem’s presentation, Dr. Raschid-Sally opened the floor to questions and comments on all three

presentations.

Mr. Appenteng noted that US\$ 500,000 to meet the needs of 52 communities was an unrealistic investment in today's economy. He reiterated the need for communities to be aware of their rights. He also emphasised that title deeds to land would go some way to resolve both the neglect of the DACs by district assemblies, as well as the disputes between DACs and host communities.

Isaac Agbo-Tetteh stated that DACs do vote in local elections, and that this is a clear signal of the jurisdiction under which the communities fall. He also maintained that the concept of the VRA managing certain settlements – namely, the Akosombo Township – and not others should be abolished.

Simon Manu agreed, saying that it was VRA 'ownership' of communities was problematic. This created a rationale for the Trust Fund and a form of 'dependency syndrome', which undermines the roles of district assemblies. Given the historical context, there is a current need for the Trust Fund. However, its investments should be channelled through the district assemblies. He disagreed with Isaac Agbo-Tetteh in the assertion that the fact that DACs vote in local elections is a sign that they 'belong' to district assemblies. Local elections are overseen by central government; not local government.

Dr. Bekoe queried whether the VRA and the Trust Fund have discussed an exit strategy. The current set-up seems unsustainable. He also asked whether the DACs pay taxes to district assemblies at the moment.

Isaac Agbo-Tetteh responded by citing examples of DACs expecting the VRA or the Trust Fund to pay their electricity bills. He also said that his district does not collect taxes from the Akuse resettlement community; nor does the VRA or the Trust Fund pay on their behalf. The DACs feel that they do not benefit from the development efforts of the districts, which would justify their contributions to the districts' tax revenue.

Felix Amakye identified the danger of districts and the Trust Fund running parallel projects. In order to avoid such a scenario, there should be close collaboration between district authorities and the Trust Fund.

Kojo Anane Frimpong added that the settlers, host communities and traditional authorities must be included in the

discussions in order to resolve issues to the satisfaction of all parties involved. He agreed with earlier statements that funds should be channelled through district authorities. He finally noted that despite all of the lessons offered by the Akosombo experience, there is a danger that the situation is being replicated at Bui.

Friederike Diaby-Pentzlin asked whether the pilot Customary Land Secretariat at Bole had been involved in the interactions concerning land administration in the dam-affected area at Bui. Kojo Anane Frimpong responded by saying that he was not aware of such institutions.

Kwame Adam expressed his concern about the social conflict that seems to be brewing between resettled and host communities. He queried the nature of the past relationship between such communities prior to the construction of the dam. Rhoda Arthur responded by explaining that some communities were relocated across not only districts, but also regions. This brought together Akan and Ewe communities that in the past would have had little, if any, interactions. This caused shifts in the roles of traditional authorities. Resettled chiefs were suddenly being asked to pledge allegiance to the traditional authorities in the new settlement areas.

Mr. Appenteng returned to the issue of land acquisition. If this had been managed properly, such issues would not have arisen. Rhoda Arthur said that it had been agreed that government should release the land acquisition documents, and make copies available to the resettled communities.

Friederike Diaby-Pentzlin observed that there seem to be a myriad of complex problems at play at dam-affected areas; these may not be related to land claims, which on their part also need to be clarified.

In response to Dr. Bekoe's question, Patience Asem noted that the VRA Board raised the issue of exit strategy for the Trust Fund. It is something that is being considered; however, it can become realistic only when the communities are economically empowered. If the handing over is to be revisited, it should proceed in a gradual manner in order to allow the stakeholders concerned to adjust to it and for it to be managed properly. The resettlement process and the payment of compensation occurred in an ad hoc manner. Nor were they informed by sociological studies, which could have foreseen the possible power struggles between resettled and host communities.

	<p>Participants agreed that a crucial step in resolving many of these issues was to channel assistance to the DACs through the district assemblies. The Secretariat of the Trust Fund should prepare guidelines for the disbursement of resources, and monitor compliance. This might also create incentives for development partners and interested investors to enter the communities. Simon Manu noted that it may be easier to attract the interest of private investors, as opposed to development partners, since the latter are rather restricted in their activities. Requests for assistance must also be couched in particular terms. Dr. Bekoe noted that proposals should be carefully prepared. He also speculated that obtaining counter-part funding might prove difficult. Patience Asem added that replication or overlap should not be an issue, since information on on-going projects is available.</p>
<p>4. Wrap-up</p>	<p>Participants agreed that a key component of any 'way forward' would have to be a sensitisation framework or plan. Rhoda Arthur noted that the VRA had contracted a consultant to draw up an environmental management plan, which also addressed the social dimensions of the Akosombo and Kpong dams. The intention was to produce a legally binding document on correcting the social ills that resulted from the construction of the dams. The study built on extensive consultations with communities and district assemblies. Rhoda Arthur would meet with the consultant and discuss how the study could serve as a basis for a future sensitisation framework.</p> <p>The Secretariat, the Trust Fund, GTZ and the Local Government Studies will, in turn, draft a strategy for the sensitization process.</p> <p>Mr. Appenteng noted that the plan should be driven by all stakeholders, and that participation would be very important. The Forum will also be pleased to have input into the plan and to be able to monitor it.</p> <p>Nene Tetteh Amoako IV asked for a response from the Trust Fund concerning the extension of its mandate to Kpong-affected communities. Ms. Asem replied that the Trust Fund had been established for the 52 communities that had been resettled as a result of the Akosombo dam. She recognised the injustice of this stance, and stated that the situation could only be corrected by the VRA, not the Trust Fund. Rhoda Arthur added that the issue would be communicated to the appropriate office and looked into. Simon Manu said that it would have been better for VRA to address the resettlement issues arising from both dams.</p> <p>By way of conclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhoda Arthur will follow up on the environmental management plan commissioned by the VRA • The meeting participants also called on the upcoming livelihood study at Bui to examine alternative livelihood strategies, and to develop these together with the communities in order to ensure their support.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GTZ and WWF expressed their interest to participate in the development and implementation of the sensitisation framework by providing technical support. Isaac Agbo-Tetteh also vouched the support of his district assembly to the process. <p>The meeting ended with a prayer by Rhoda Arthur at 13.00.</p>
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